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# USDA'S ACCEPTANCE SERVICE FOR MEAT AND MEAT PRODUCTS

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## **VOLUME MEAT BUYING MADE EASY WITH USDA'S MEAT ACCEPTANCE SERVICE**

**E**ven if you're an experienced institutional meat buyer, you may not be getting the kind of meat you want at a competitive price.

Maybe you make repeated trips to suppliers to see if your requirements are met—or sometimes have to reject a shipment.

There is an easier way. Many large-quantity meat buyers—public and private—use the U.S. Department of Agricul-

ture's official acceptance service for meat and meat products. Hospitals, schools, restaurants, hotels, airlines, and steamship lines are a few. Under this service, USDA specialists examine and certify that your purchase meets contract requirements.

The acceptance service is provided for a fee, usually paid by the supplier. Although this expense may be included in the price you pay—usually only a fraction of a cent per pound—the service could save you money by assuring you of getting the quality you want.

For help in using this service, contact your nearest USDA meat grading supervisor, who will help you select the items you want to buy in accordance with specifications developed and approved by USDA and industry.

Prospective suppliers submit their bids to you on the basis of the specifications. Then, before the meat is delivered to you, an official grader in USDA's Consumer and Marketing Service checks the product to make sure it complies with the specifications. He then stamps each item or sealed package to certify product compliance.

On the following pages, you will find guidelines for using the Meat Acceptance Service.

If you are interested in using the acceptance service for products other than meat, contact the nearest grading office of USDA's Consumer and Marketing Service for poultry and eggs, fruits and vegetables, or dairy products.

## IMP SPECIFICATIONS FOR MEAT PRODUCTS

The Meat Acceptance Service is based on USDA-approved Institutional Meat Purchase Specifications, commonly called IMPS. These specifications are the end product of extensive testing and development conducted by the Livestock Division of USDA's Consumer and Marketing Service in conjunction with various segments of the meat industry.

Currently, specifications are available for fresh beef, fresh lamb and mutton, fresh veal and calf, fresh pork, cured pork, sausage products, and portion-cut meat products. Specifications for cured beef and edible by-products are being developed. Items not covered in IMPS are accepted under the National Association of State Purchasing Officials (NASPO) Specifications.

The specifications have been prepared to make their use as easy as possible. Each item is numbered and may be referred to simply by number. The specifications for fresh beef, for instance, are called Series 100. The items in this category number from 100 to 193. Each item listed in these specifications is described in careful detail. When a purchasing agent orders any item—for instance, Item 104 (rib, oven prepared)—there is no doubt on the part of the supplier or the Federal meat grader as to exactly what is wanted.



### HOW TO USE IMPS

Here is how the purchasing agent makes use of the specifications and the USDA Meat Acceptance Service:

- (1) He obtains from the Government Printing Office copies of the IMPS General Requirements and the specifications concerning the meat and meat products he wishes to purchase. (See page 4 for list of specifications.) Most suppliers already have copies.
- (2) He lists the items he is going to buy and indicates the grade, weight range, and state of refrigeration, etc.
- (3) He seeks bids on the items desired and awards contracts to the lowest bidders. Then he forwards a copy of the purchase awards to the nearest USDA meat grading supervisor. (See list on back cover.)



## FEDERAL GRADER ACCEPTANCE

When the purchaser requests delivery, the supplier asks the nearest USDA meat grading office to have a grader examine the product. The meat grader is responsible for accepting the product and certifying that it is in compliance with specifications.

The Federal grader stamps each acceptable meat item, or the sealed carton in which it is contained, with a shield-shaped stamp bearing the words, "USDA Accepted as Specified." This assures the purchaser that all products delivered to him met the requirements of the specifications at the time of acceptance.

This method of meat procurement assures the purchaser of a wholesome product (only meat that has passed inspection for wholesomeness will be examined for "acceptance") of the grade, trim, and weight range requested. This system also encourages competitive bidding and usually results in overall lower costs; permits long-range meal planning; and eliminates controversies between the buyer and seller over compliance of product.

**COPIES OF IMPS ARE AVAILABLE** from the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C. 20402, as follows:

- Institutional Meat Purchase Specifications (IMPS)—General Requirements for Use under USDA Acceptance Service, 5¢ per copy.

- IMPS for Fresh Beef—Series 100, 20¢ per copy.
- IMPS for Fresh Lamb and Mutton—Series 200, 10¢ per copy.
- IMPS for Fresh Veal and Calf—Series 300, 15¢ per copy.
- IMPS for Fresh Pork—Series 400, 15¢ per copy.
- IMPS for Cured, Cured and Smoked, and Fully-Cooked Pork Products—Series 500, 15¢ per copy.
- IMPS for Sausage Products—Series 800, 20¢ per copy.
- IMPS for Portion-Cut Meat Products—Series 1000, 20¢ per copy.

## MARKINGS ON PRODUCTS AND CONTAINERS

### QUALITY GRADE MARKS

All carcasses and most cuts of beef, veal, calf, lamb, yearling mutton, and mutton will bear a ribbon-like imprint of the applicable quality grade mark.



## CLASS MARKS

Bull and stag beef and veal, calf, yearling mutton, and mutton are also identified with the class name in addition to the grade. Grade marks applied to lamb and to steer, heifer, and cow beef do not include the class name.

## INSPECTION MARKS

Federally inspected meat or containers in which it is packed bear a round Federal meat inspection mark. An inspection mark of a different shape will appear on meat originating in an approved non-federally inspected plant. Inspection stamps indicate that the meat was wholesome and fit for human consumption at time of inspection. Do not confuse the inspection mark with the shield-shaped quality grade mark shown above.

## YIELD GRADE MARKS

If specified, USDA yield grade mark will appear on carcasses or wholesale cuts of beef, lamb, yearling mutton, or mutton. Yield grades identify carcass differences in yields of boneless, trimmed retail cuts. Yield Grade 1 represents the highest



MUTTON



yield of retail cuts; Yield Grade 5 the lowest yield.

## ACCEPTANCE STAMPS

In addition to inspection marks and grade marks, one or two other stamps appear on USDA-accepted products.

**CHILLED PRODUCT** —The imprint of the USDA Accepted as Specified stamp will appear on all products that can be individually stamped or on the carton if the product can not be individually stamped. When this stamp is applied to containers, it will be placed over the sealing tape on the container and over the grade name in the lower left corner of one end of the container. (The letters AC in the example are a code to identify the grader who accepted the product.)



**FROZEN PRODUCT** —All products that can be individually stamped will bear the USDA Accepted as Specified stamp. In addition, all containers will bear the stamps shown at the right. These will be applied as follows: The USDA Accepted as Specified stamp will be applied over the grade name in the lower left corner of one end of the



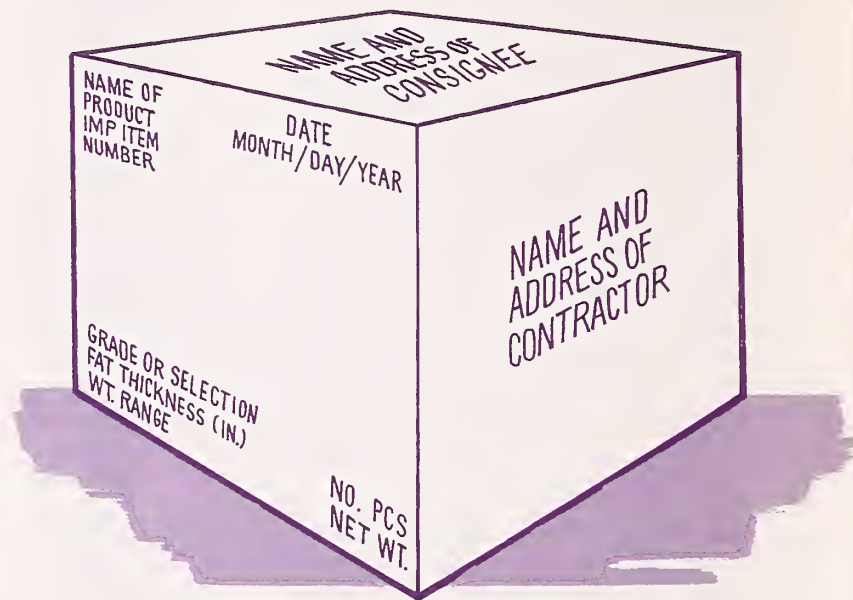
container. The USDA shield stamp will be applied over the date in the upper right corner of one end of the container. This stamp also will be applied over the sealing tape on the container when product within the container is not individually stamped.

## OTHER CONTAINER MARKINGS (Containers of 25 pounds or more)

**TOP OR SIDE** —Name and address of the contractor; name and address of the consignee; and the name and address of the supplier if other than the contractor.

**ONE END**—The following information will usually appear on one end of the container: true name of product and item number; date of examination and acceptance; options such as grade or selection, fat thickness, formula, weight range, etc.; number of pieces or packages in the container, and the net weight.

Note: For containers of **less than 25 pounds**, the above marking requirements may be printed or typed on a label and attached to one end of the container.





## RECEIVING AND STORING PRODUCT

1. When it is required that a meat grading certificate accompany the shipment, make certain it is received and that all items received are listed on the certificate.
2. Check meat items and/or containers for proper USDA acceptance and grade marks.
3. Check weights for accuracy.
4. If any discrepancies are noted, do not accept delivery. Report discrepancies immediately to the purchasing agent.
5. Place chilled product in cooler and frozen product in freezer as soon as possible.
6. Remove wrappings from chilled fresh product. Hang large items such as carcasses, rounds, ribs, etc., on meat hooks and place smaller items on shelves.
7. Remove wrappings from smoked meat cuts and hang on hooks or place on shelves to permit proper circulation of air around the product.
8. Remove sausage products from master containers and place on shelves or hang, as applicable.
9. Loosen covers from containers of chilled ground or diced meat.
10. Store new product to the rear of previously received items. This will insure that older stock will be used first.
11. Remove or obliterate all USDA acceptance markings before discarding empty containers.

## HOW TO CONTACT USDA ABOUT MEAT ACCEPTANCE SERVICE

Listed below are the locations and telephone numbers of Main Station Supervisors for the Consumer and Marketing Service Meat Grading Branch. If you wish to use the Meat Acceptance Service, or have any questions, the meat grading supervisor nearest your location will be glad to help you. Questions may be directed to:

Meat Grading Branch  
Livestock Division  
Consumer and Marketing Service  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Washington, D. C. 20250

### AREA OFFICES:

1795 Peachtree St., N.E.,  
Room 201  
Atlanta, Georgia 30309  
Tel.: 404 526-5158

Livestock Exchange Bldg.,  
Rm. 522  
Chicago, Illinois 60609  
Tel.: 312 353-5286

Livestock Exchange Bldg.,  
Rm. 23  
Cleveland, Ohio 44102  
Tel.: 216 522-4868

403 Livestock Exchange Bldg.  
Denver, Colorado 80216  
Tel.: 303 297-4088

767 Federal Bldg.  
201 Walnut St.  
Des Moines, Iowa 50309  
Tel.: 515 284-4572

233 Livestock Exchange Bldg.  
Fort Worth, Texas 76106  
Tel.: 817 334-3260

760 Livestock Exchange Bldg.  
Kansas City, Missouri 64102  
Tel.: 816 374-5331

Bldg. 7, Sec. A  
4747 Eastern Avenue  
Los Angeles (Bell), Calif. 90201  
Tel.: 213 268-1392

P. O. Box 187  
27 Exchange Bldg.  
National Stock Yards, Illinois  
62071  
Tel.: 618 274-2305  
901 Broad Street  
Newark, New Jersey 07102  
Tel.: 201 645-3950

609 Livestock Exchange Bldg.  
Omaha, Nebraska 68107  
Tel.: 402 221-4636

630 Sansome St., Rm. 748  
San Francisco, Calif. 94111  
Tel.: 415 556-5815

255 Livestock Exchange Bldg.  
Sioux City, Iowa 51107  
Tel.: 712 252-0259

201 Federal Bldg.  
P. O. Box 27  
So. St. Paul, Minnesota 55076  
Tel.: 612 725-7161

### MARKETING BULLETIN NO. 47



ISSUED JUNE 1969

★ GPO : 1969 O—351—273